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ENG 5500-001: Practicum in Teaching and Tutoring Writing

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ENGLISH 5500: Practicum in Teaching and Tutoring Writing, Fall 2006
Mondays 3:00 to 5:00
3110 Coleman Hall (The Writing Center)

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This practicum will serve as a seminar in the theory and practice of tutoring writing. Each week, in addition to discussing reading assignments, we will devote substantial class time to discussing issues that arise from your experience of tutoring in the Writing Center. This syllabus will give you an idea of what we'll be covering together this semester so that you can anticipate and prepare.

Practicum participants are expected to....

- Attend all practicum meetings
- Complete all reading assignments
- Contribute to class discussions
- Prepare several collaborative (group) presentations
- Present a lively "Show and Tell" segment based on self-selected reading or electronic sources (with handouts)
- Post weekly to an electronic journal
- Complete a case study assignment based on an actual tutoring session (s)

Texts

Tutoring Writing: A Practical Guide for Conferences. McAndrew and Reigstad (2001)

A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One to One. Rafoth, ed. (2000)

Writing Center Theory and Practice. Barnett and Blumner, ed. (2001)

Writing Center Research: Extending the Conversation. Gillespie, ed. (2002)

Readings and Presentations

Our readings will introduce issues relevant to your work in the Writing Center. In our discussions we will attempt to build bridges between the theories implicit in these readings and our own practices.

Group Work

In preparation for a number of class meetings, you will work with a group to consider how to best facilitate our discussion of the issues raised by the assigned reading. We encourage you to get creative in planning activities that will engage the class in these issues. Games, in-class exercises, handouts, and PowerPoint presentations are all welcome. **Summaries are not.** Groups should plan to confer outside of class.

Show and Tell

Each week one of you will select a reading or electronic resource that is useful for the practicing tutor. Readings might be found in one of the many journals on the Writing Center shelves or in some respectable virtual environment (such as the NCTE Inbox.) Electronic resources might include the Web sites of professional organizations (such as the NCTE.) You will prepare a properly documented handout that captures the overall thesis and main points of the article or presents a brief but concrete description of the resource. Also include your assessment of the reading/resource (strengths, weaknesses, questions raised.) The handout will provide a shared basis for discussion of the theoretical assumptions and practical potential of the article or resource.

Journal

One of the purposes of keeping a journal is to document experiences and insights that may otherwise be lost to memory. In a class such as this one, another purpose might be to share entries with others, allowing them to benefit from your unique take on things. The journal you are asked to keep for this class is electronic in nature, facilitated through a program called WEBCT, which will be explained the second week of class. While some of your journal entries will be guided by specific themes and readings, most will be based on insights gleaned from tutoring sessions, interactions with other tutors, and Writing Center-related readings. Aim for approximately 500 words per week. Drs. Kory and Markelis will occasionally respond to the postings.

Case Study

The purpose of the case study assignment is to give you an opportunity to think in an organized and sustained way about some of the many complex issues involved in one-on-one collaborative learning in the context of a specific tutoring session (or perhaps several sessions with one student writer.) We will discuss the methodological and ethical issues involved in analyzing a tutoring session during the **7th week**. These include gaining permission from the student in writing, taking post-session notes, interviewing students about their perceptions of the session, and utilizing quotes and written student work in your case study. We will workshop drafts of the case study the **14th week** of class. Final case studies will be due the **15th week**.

Attendance and Participation

Because we begin practicum by talking about experiences that involve or affect all tutors, because much of the work done in class is collaborative in nature, because you are serious scholars seeking knowledge (and, heck, because you're getting paid for this), you are expected to attend, and be on time for, every class session. (Although you will not receive a letter grade for this class, it is possible to not get credit for the practicum.) If an emergency arises, please contact **both** Dr. Markelis and Dr. Kory (if possible) in advance via phone or email.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1: August 21

Tutoring Writing, 6: What Tutoring Is: Models & Strategies
A Tutor's Guide, 9: What Line? I Didn't See Any Line
Introduction to WEBCT
Sign-ups for Show and Tell

Week 2: August 28

Tutoring Writing 5: Tutoring When the Writer Has a Topic but No Draft
A Tutor's Guide, 135: Becoming a Resource: Multiple Ways of Thinking About Information
A Tutor's Guide, 4: Talk to Me: Engaging Reluctant Writers (Facilitated by Group 1)

Week 3: September 4 LABOR DAY (No class)

Week 4: September 11

A Tutor's Guide 3: Tutoring in Emotionally Charged Sessions (Facilitated by Group 2)
Theory/Practice, 316: Difficult Clients and Tutor Dependency
Show and Tell

Week 5: September 18

Tutoring Writing, 8: Tutoring Different People (Facilitated by Group 3)
Theory/Practice, 376 : Learning Disabilities and the Writing Center
and 350: Whispers of Coming and Going': Lessons from Fannie
Show and Tell

Week 6: September 25

Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar (handout)
Mina Shaughnessy article, "Diving in" (handout)
Show and Tell

Week 7: October 2

A Tutor's Guide, 12: Recent Developments in Assisting ESL Writers (Facilitated by Group 4)
Theory/Practice, Rethinking Writing Center Conferencing Strategies for the ESL
Writer

Week 8: October 9

WC Research, xv Introduction
and Insider as Outsider: Participant Observation as
Writing Center Research (53)
and Nancy Welch, "The Return of the Suppressed: Tutoring Stories in a
Transitional Space" (203)
Show and Tell

Week 9: October 16

A Tutor's Guide 6: Is There a Creative Writer in the House?

- and 7: Style in the Writing Center (Both articles facilitated by Group 1)
- 8: Organizing Ideas: Focus in the Key
Show and Tell

Week 10: October 23

- A Tutor's Guide, 14: Using Others' Words: Quoting, Summarizing, and Documenting Sources
and 13: Can You Proofread This? (Both articles facilitated by Group 2)
Understanding Plagiarism and other plagiarism handouts

Show and Tell

Week 11: October 30

- Theory and Practice, Louise Smith, "Independence and Collaboration: Why We Should
Decentralize Writing Centers" (408)
and Mark Waldo, "The Last Best Place for Writing Across the Curriculum:
The Writing Center" (415)
and Murphy/Law, "Writing Centers and WAC Programs as Infostructures"
(458)

Show and Tell

Week 12: November 6

- Theory/Practice, 475: Straddling the Virtual Fence (Facilitated by Group 4)
and 555: Towards a Rhetoric of On-Line Tutoring
and 561: Information Literacy and the Writing Center

Show and Tell

Week 13: November 13

- Theory and Practice, Elizabeth Boquet, "A History of Writing Centers, Pre- to Post-Open
Admissions" (41)
and Terrance Riley, "The Unpromising Future of Writing Centers" (139)

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14: November 27

Workshopping rough drafts of case study paper

Week 15: December 4

Papers due. End-of-the-semester PARTY!!

NOTE: We may make minor changes to this syllabus in order to suit the needs of the class. Changes will be announced in advance.